



MISSION AND GOALS

Based on issues identified in focus groups, CAC meetings and surveys, a direction for the future of the Downtown slowly began to form. Further insight was provided through analysis of the existing condition as well as current and future trends affecting Downtown Lowell. Utilizing these resources, members of the Downtown community established and endorsed the following principles for guiding the future direction of Downtown Lowell:

“Downtown Lowell is envisioned as a unique, vibrant 24-hour community that provides an attractive, safe and ‘user friendly’ environment for people to work, shop, visit and live.”

This Plan seeks to provide a blueprint for transforming Downtown Lowell into a place where all groups of people, from workers to shoppers to tourists, students and residents can create a continuous hub of activity. Downtown Lowell must provide everyone three basic qualities:



Boarding House Park during the Lowell Folk Festival



The Merrimack River

Photo: Higgins & Ross

1. Downtown Lowell must be physically attractive and void of unkempt buildings, trash, graffiti and other unappealing features;
2. Downtown Lowell must be a safe place at all times, especially during evenings and weekends;
3. Downtown Lowell must strive to be interesting and “user friendly,” focusing on making the Downtown easy and convenient for these user groups to access on a regular basis.

Major Goals

The development of the 2001 Downtown Lowell Master Plan has been guided by goals and objectives that were established by the Citizen Advisory Committee and refined throughout the planning process. This list underlies the rationale for the recommendations that have been included in this Master Plan.

- **Utilize the unique cultural heritage, historic tradition and natural resources of Downtown Lowell to generate new economic opportunities and growth in the Downtown.**

Lowell has drawn upon its historic resources as the foundation of an economic development growth spurt that has transformed the heart of Downtown Lowell. Downtown Lowell must continue to draw upon its existing resources and character. Strengths such as ethnic diversity, canals and the Merrimack River must be utilized to their full potential in order for Downtown Lowell to thrive.

- **Make Downtown Lowell safe and convenient for pedestrians.**
On a consistent basis, all of Downtown’s user groups should enjoy walking throughout the area. Priority should be given to the pedestrian in the Downtown over cars, buses, trolleys and other transportation systems. Pedestrians should also feel comfortable walking throughout Downtown Lowell during all times of the day.
- **Promote new housing opportunities in Downtown Lowell, especially for artists.**

Considerable effort must be focused on creating a viable neighborhood in Downtown Lowell with a diversity of housing opportunities. Residents will provide additional energy and activity to Downtown Lowell – especially during weekends and evenings. New residents will also enhance the viability of retail and restaurants located within Downtown Lowell. In particular, artists will bring a unique perspective to Downtown Lowell and will enhance the cultural offerings available.

- **Create an active, clean and safe urban riverfront that creates opportunities for recreation and becomes the spine of Downtown Lowell.**

The creation of the Riverwalk has renewed focus on the Merrimack River and its surrounding areas. Downtown Lowell should continue to reclaim its urban riverfront. New development should be encouraged along Downtown Lowell's waterfront, but must be carefully designed to encourage public access, safety and increased activity. New connections between the Downtown Core and the riverfront should be created and existing connections enhanced.

- **Enhance the positive image of and investment in the Downtown.**

Downtown Lowell should continue to spread the word about its many successes. The current marketing campaign, "There's a lot to like about Lowell," supported by the City and its numerous partners, has begun to reshape the image of Downtown Lowell. This Master Plan documents steps to maintain this positive image through the enhancement of the physical environment, continued positive marketing and new public and private investments.

- **Develop cooperation and coordination among Downtown Lowell organizations – particularly in the areas of marketing and maintenance.**

This Master Plan will seek to develop a coordinated approach to the future development and management of activity. Focus should be placed on the areas of marketing and maintenance where efforts are currently spread amongst a wide variety and large number of groups.

- **Develop a retail mix in Downtown Lowell that is attractive to both residents and visitors.**

Downtown Lowell must seek customers from all potential customers. A mix of shops that addresses workers, existing and new Downtown residents as well as visitors will offer the greatest chance of creating a stable, successful commercial base.



The Riverwalk and park behind the Tsongas Arena

Photo: Higgins & Ross

